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The Focus.

United States Department of Agriculture

PREPARED BY Forest Service

Southwestern Region

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Dear Partner:

Take a journey with us to a land of RECREATION opportunities: your NATIONAL FORESTS.

- ◇ *It is our vision of the future.*
- ◇ *It is our vision after listening to you.*
- ◇ *It is our commitment to serving people while caring for the land.*

Read now and enjoy . . .

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Greetings from Arizona's National Forest Supervisors:

Fresh off the press is the Forest Service's recreation vision statement for Arizona, and **substantial** funding has also started flowing in support of the Arizona Recreation Initiative.

The vision, called **The Focus**, is the culmination of statewide efforts from resource managers, analysts, user groups, educators, and numerous others. We want to take this opportunity to thank you, and to present you with this personal copy of **The Focus**---our vision for recreation on Arizona's National Forests. As a concerned and active individual, you have helped form our vision. It will help guide us through the exciting years ahead.

Another welcome development is the financial support for the Arizona Recreation Initiative. Our Arizona congressional delegation has been working very hard (and successfully) towards getting special money for recreation developments on National Forests. In 1990, Arizona was allocated additional money above our regular budget in support of the Initiative. The majority of the money will be used to accelerate recreation Construction scheduled in the forest plans, and to do heavy maintenance. Things are looking up!

Forest Service partnerships and volunteers have become a major means of providing quality recreation developments on Arizona's National Forests. Numerous groups, too many to mention, have worked with us in Challenge-Cost Share agreements to build successes such as the nationally renowned Boulder Creek project. There are ample opportunities for more of the same in the future. As the excitement builds, partnerships are forming and volunteers are joining us at increasing rates.

As you can see from the above, we are happy to be able to share this good news with you, and look forward to your continued support and involvement in the future.

Sincerely,

Forest Supervisor, Apache-Sitgreaves

Forest Supervisor, Kaibab

Forest Supervisor, Coconino

Forest Supervisor, Prescott

Forest Supervisor, Coronado

Forest Supervisor, Tonto

ARIZONA

Hello, Friend

Hello, friend.

I know you well. And you, more than most, understand my needs, my values, my fears.

We've looked after one another for many a year.

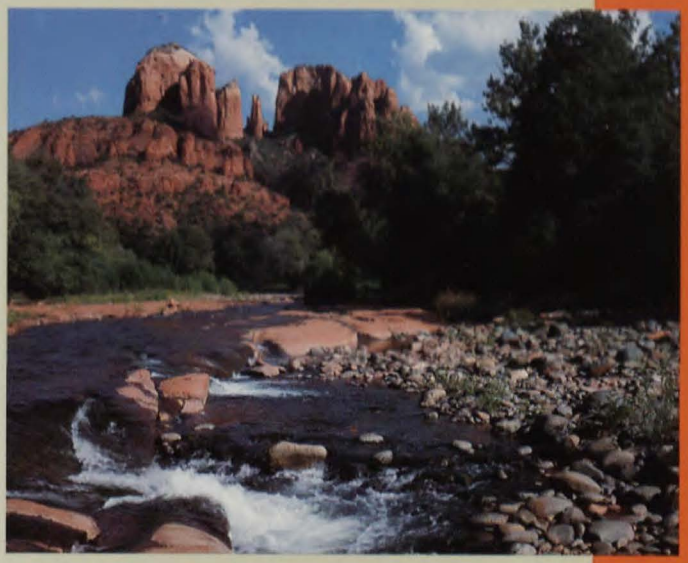
I am . . . the land.

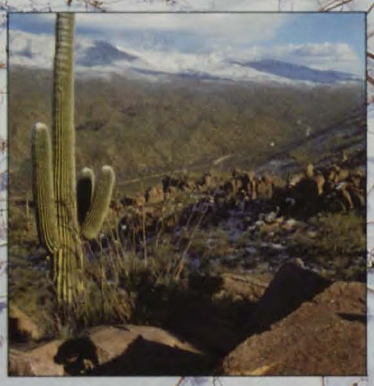
The land, and all things upon it, within it, above it.

In our relationship you usually are the thinker, speaker, writer. Seldom do I have the chance to tell my heart.

This is one of those occasions.

Now, compadre, do you remember. . . ?





The Memory

Forty years ago one of you in an old Ford departed Flagstaff southward in the late afternoon on Alternate 89—past ponderosa stumps almost as wide as a man is tall, past the log mansions of nineteenth century lumbermen, past the abandoned grade of a narrow-guage logging railroad. . . .

Fourteen miles, Lookout Point. From there you swung 2000 feet down the switchbacks, second gear growling, muffler popping, you praying the clutch wouldn't burn. . . .

Horizontal rays of sundown illuminated bronze walls, russet buttes, saffron ledges, emerald rims. . . .

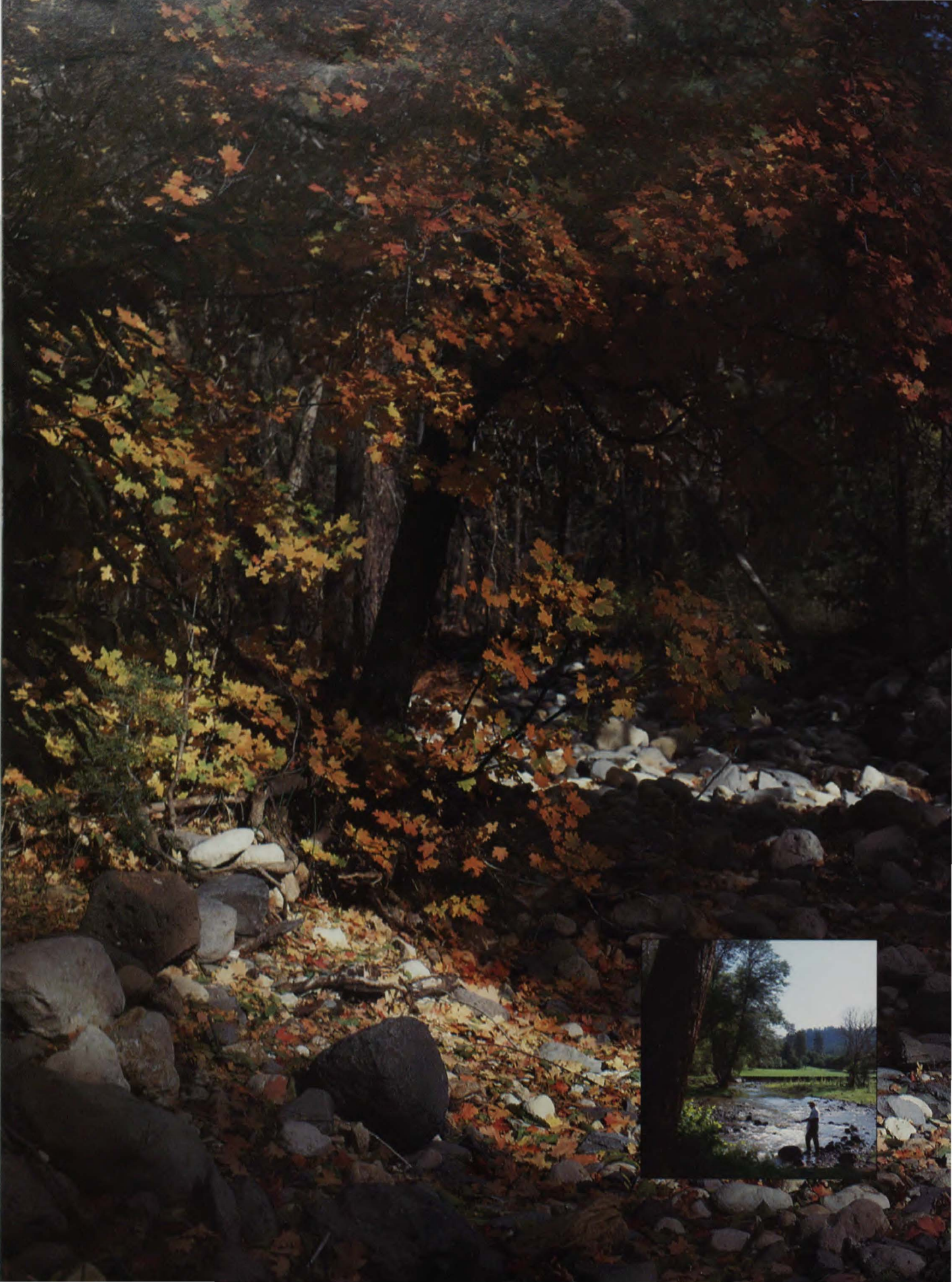
State Fish Farm. Call of the Canyon Lodge. Pump House Wash. As the gloom deepened, the tortuous track descended from conifer to box elder, sycamore, oak, alder, sumac. Except for the road the only human mark was the rickety wooden flume which irrigated orchards below. Near Indian Gardens you wheeled into a private arbor by a bank of murmuring Oak Creek. Soon two German brown trout and sliced spuds sizzled over hardwood coals. . . .

Supper chores done, you casually tossed out a tarp and bedroll. And then as the narrow slit of sky twinkled with ten thousand lights, you nestled into my bosom and fell asleep. If another car went by that night, you did not hear it, and you did not wake until a golden eagle screamed reveille. . . .

That is how it could have been in all of Arizona's forests forty years ago. Even twenty years. Some places, ten.

One canyon or mesa or skyline. One outdoor seeker of solitude. One camp.

You might be that lone man or woman at Bear Canyon on the Coronado . . . at Honeymoon Cabin on the Apache . . . at Potato Patch on the Prescott . . . at Sheep Crossing on the Sitgreaves . . . at Big Springs on the Kaibab . . . at Rogers Lake on the Coconino . . . or at Horton Creek on the Tonto. You were so few, so thrifty, so spread apart, so undemanding, you were no burden.



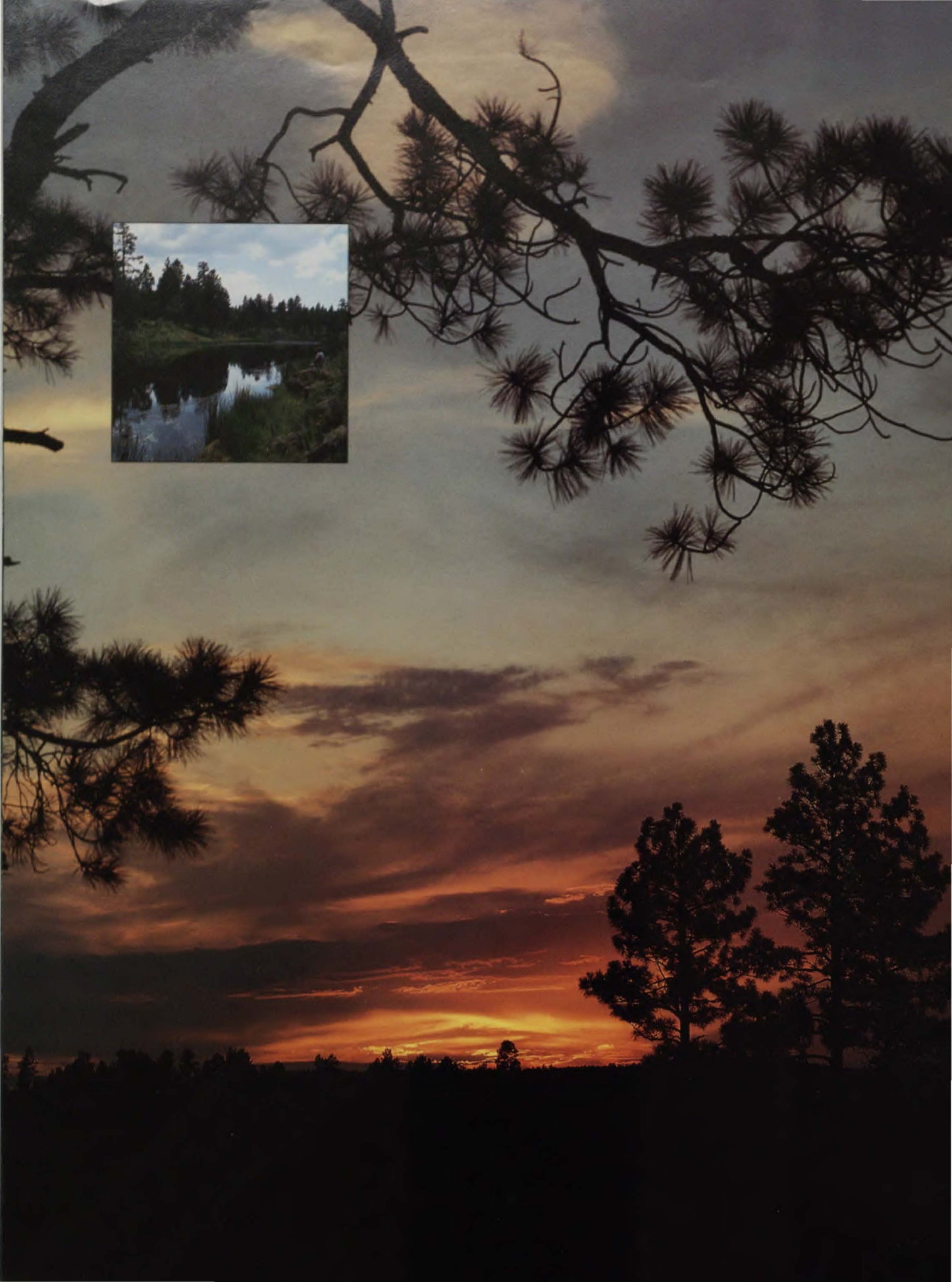
The Journey

Friend, there still are men, women and children of your kind—foresters, land managers, wildlife biologists, watershed experts, Scouts, soil conservers, natural scientists, sportsmen, tree growers, Campfire Boys and Girls, environmental monitors, hikers and horseback riders, mindful motorists and boaters, students and stumpsitters and many kinds of citizen volunteers.

But Arizona's home population has multiplied from 750,000 in 1950 to some 4 million today, promising to reach 6 million by year 2005.

Abruptly, residents and visitors steer nimble vehicles along wide, paved highways to all my horizons. Narrow, gravel tracks which once cost five hours and two flat tires are now 90-minute jaunts. Arizona's six national forests rank among the most frequently visited in America. A trickle of a tourist industry which not long ago lagged far behind copper, cotton and cattle, currently ranks second behind technology in Arizona. Tourism adds $5 billion per year to the state's economy.

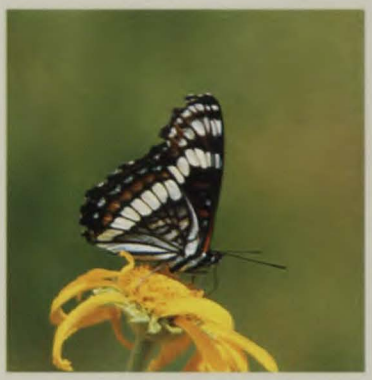
People now come to me in such sheer, unfettered numbers, so urban in instinct, so young and energetic, so lacking in outdoor instinct, so inclined to cluster together, so indulgent of every whim, I can scarcely endure their presence.



The Journey

When you—alone—parked on Oak Creek and fished and supped and slept, I hardly knew you were there.

But now. To Arizona's national forests, twenty million visitors. Twenty million days. By these swelling ranks of recreationists, I am being loved to death.



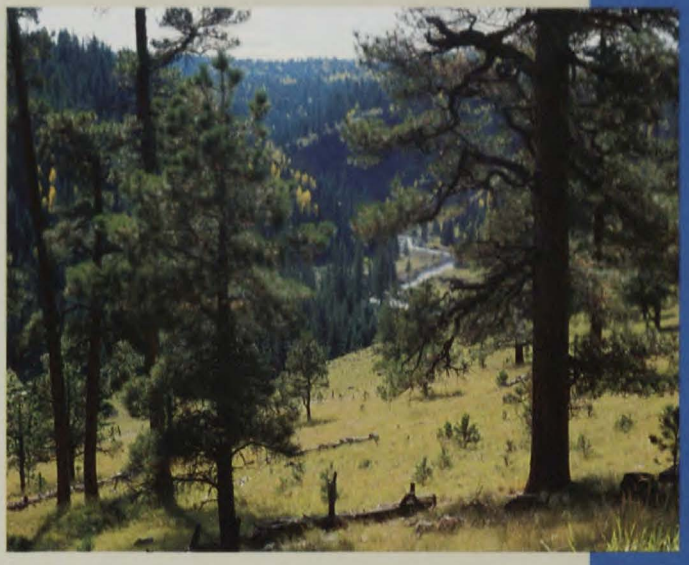
Relatively few, but enough to hurt, are rogues who vandalize my facilities and amenities . . . strip away my protective plants . . . harrass my hosts of wild creatures . . . pollute my waters and litter my byways . . . bruise my skin with mindless trespass . . . pilfer my treasuries of ancient human cultures.

But as legions of Arizonans and vacationists seek respite from city stress, I also am overrun in certain locales simply by too many footfalls, too many tire tracks of some of my fondest admirers.

Then, meanwhile, my caretakers did not always foresee the multiplying masses now invading my innermost recesses. Or if they anticipated the incursion, their words of concern and caution long went unheeded.

My managers did not always possess the wealth or staff to protect me . . . at properly fashioned and controlled places where visitors might park, picnic, hike, cook, and sleep.

Provided no proper spot to put down, visitors made their own encampment, often neither wisely nor well. Shown no durable pathway, they brushed a new trail. Given no convenient grill, they rocked up a fire pit and felled a tree for fuel.



The Vision

My friend, what will become of me by year 2005?

Will I grow tired—as drear and worn as an inner city playground? Will my native animals and unique plants retreat to extinction? Will more of my precious topsoil wash away?

Or will my owners—the people of America—be so well served that they still cleanse their minds and renew their spirits in a hundred kinds of outdoor recreation? And can it still be said that, "A wilderness, in contrast to those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain?"

Of all my acquaintances, you are the one who can help me accommodate tomorrow's visitors, in directions that will let me endure and prosper. Who else will deal with the multitudes already here, and the even greater throngs heading my way?

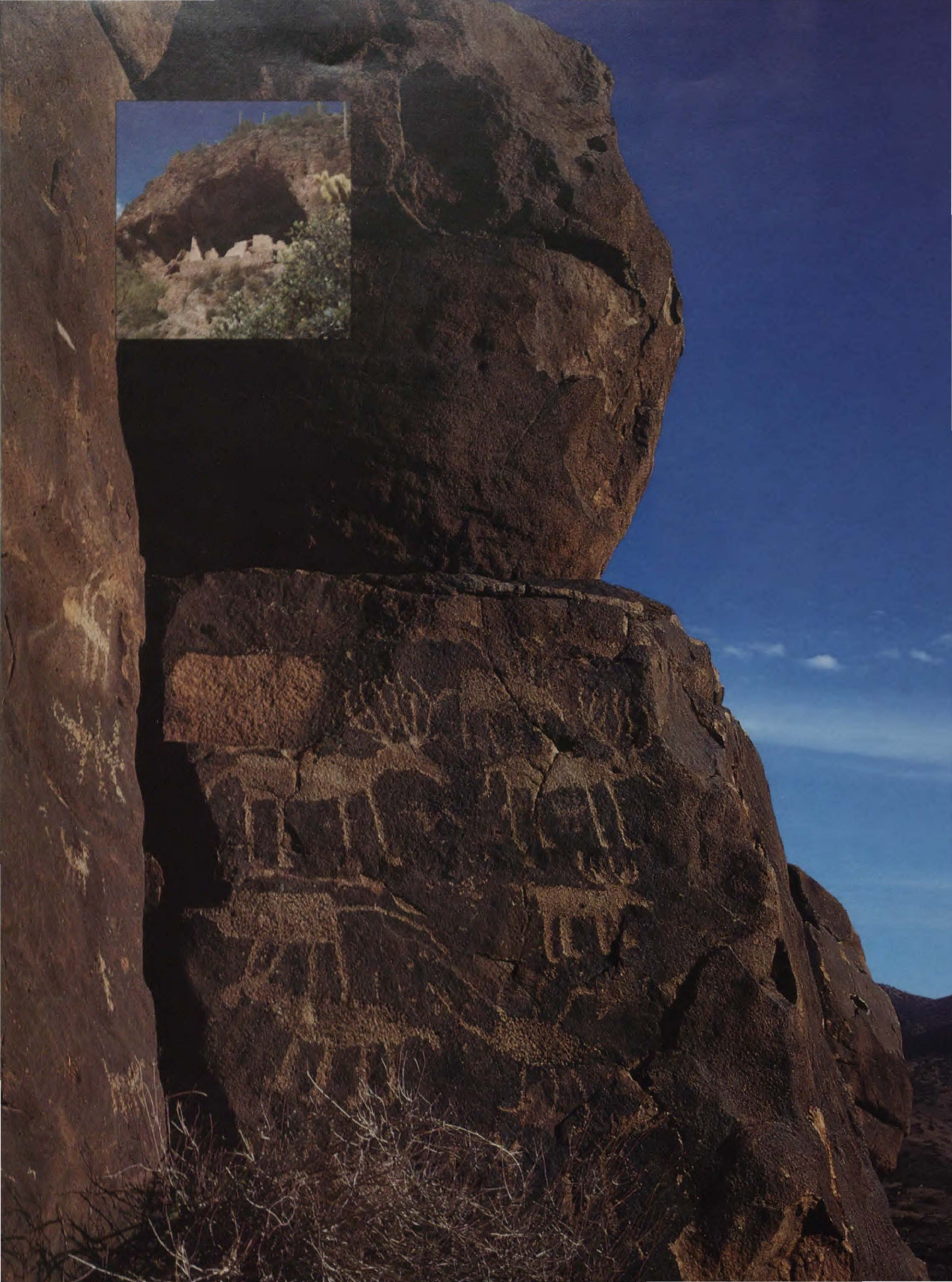
Happily, we have a beginning . . . a vision, if you will.

Its origins arose from widespread alarm among my closest friends. The caretakers of Arizona's six National Forests realized that I, the land itself, could be defaced by accelerating, undirected use. They siezed upon the opportunity to contemplate the needs of the people, but also to foreknow a realistic, credible, embraceable future which protected me, the land, as well.

They conjured up a vision of a different and perhaps better outdoor world . . . a vision composed of practical knowledge, reasonable challenges, attainable goals.

My stewards acquired fact, insight and guidance from experts and prophets from all levels of government and society. Geologist and journalist, hydrologist and hiker, engineer and sociologist, poet and pragmatist, sportsman and travel agent, river runner and photographer, economist and architect—all and more contributed to the vision.

In concensus, for Arizona it is this:



The Vision

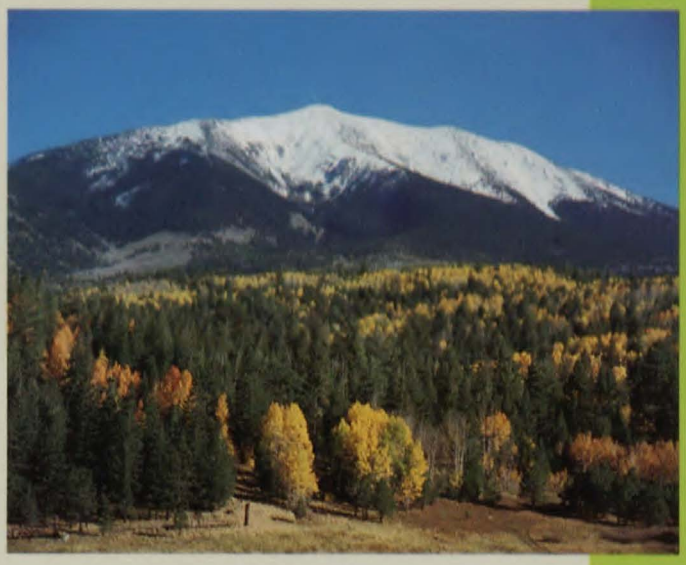
- ◊ *In year 2005, I, the forest land, am healthier and happier than I was in 1990.*
- ◊ *My cool, moist uplands continue to welcome active youngsters, men and women in middle years, and a full share of the 40 million twenty-first century Americans past retirement age.*
- ◊ *Forest managers have adopted the credo: "Quality, variety, visitor convenience."*
- ◊ *All-weather freeways now beckon crowds to autumn color, winter sports, spring rebirth.*
- ◊ *Lower-lying lands of the national forests also attract more escapees from the cities to year 'round enjoyment of desert activities and water sports.*
- ◊ *Although profuse in number, forest visitors in year 2005 feel personally fulfilled and enriched, thanks to interpretive centers, helpful publications and knowledgeable guides eager to pass along outdoor wisdom.*
- ◊ *Visitors may plan for extended stays, reserve preferred sites, or relax during day trips of pleasure driving, hiking or cycling.*
- ◊ *Many visitors picnic or camp in convenient stopovers which serve as gateways to other more primitive areas, some of which are accessible only by trail or water.*
- ◊ *Accurate information about recreation sites and activities is readily available by telephone, radio, mail order, visitor center, fax machine, sporting goods outlets.*
- ◊ *Compared to their 1990 predecessors, visitors in 2005 opt for shorter stays. Many are willing to bear the costs of a quality experience. That is, pay user fees.*
- ◊ *The number of travelers from other nations to Arizona's national forests has risen sharply. Foreigners especially seek vantage points to observe and photograph wildlife.*
- ◊ *In greater demand are facilities near to roads, for motoring remains the number one way that visitors enjoy the forests. New loop roads now lead motorists through Arizona's forest wonders.*
- ◊ *More sophisticated sites are staffed by forest professionals, contractors and volunteers who offer advice and services.*

The Vision

- ◊ *Natural and wildland realms remain the focus of forest recreation. But to protect woodlands from overuse and abuse, imaginative, engaging settings are developed where the country can carry the load, and where public interest is high.*
- ◊ *Visitors have fascinating opportunities to discover and learn about the past and to ponder how our predecessors have depended on the land's bounty for over 10,000 years.*
- ◊ *Additional exploration and nature trails test hikers. More places cater to group camping. Selected facilities are specialized for recreation vehicles, off-road equipment, bicycles, and snowmobiles.*
- ◊ *Pathways to forest features are posted with better signs. And consideration for the safety and security of each forest visitor is paramount. Accommodations are kept clean and functional.*
- ◊ *Many sites and facilities remain open for longer seasons—some year 'round.*
- ◊ *Partnerships prosper. The Forest Service is still the principal, but not the only, provider of outdoor recreation. In scores of programs large and small, forest managers join hands with individuals, clubs, corporations, non-profit institutions and other government agencies to serve the needs of recreationists and tourists within the forests.*
- ◊ *These partnerships include co-sponsored information centers where visitors learn forest lore and legend, where scholars pursue research, where commercial forest users explain their role.*
- ◊ *Special attention is given to the needs of Americans of limited abilities. Here and there in the forests are braille trails, fragrance parks, and touch-and-texture exhibits where blind, deaf, and otherwise handicapped visitors may experience a meaningful forest encounter within limited senses and abilities.*

That's the vision. Strategies are in place to meet people where they are . . . to greet them with the genuine nature adventure they desire.

My friend, you need to do . . . that which you know how to do.



The Spirit

Old friend, we both have changed. Some of the steel has gone from the leg that strode the spine of my Mazatzals. It's been 25 years since you climbed Mount Baldy for a snowcone of hail and wild strawberries. Your battered old car is somebody else's restored historic vehicle. Many of our mutual friends have gone across the Great Divide.

No longer can you just pull off anywhere along Oak Creek and throw your bedroll down. I cannot abide the altogether freedom of guests in great numbers.

But with you on my side, into the next millineum, we may prepare forest neighborhoods for the multitudes sure to come—to create forest adventures of quality, variety and convenience. Perhaps we may even teach them to respect me as you have.

And as did John Muir, in his lyrical reverie:

"I used to envy the father of our race, dwelling as he did in contact with the new-made fields and plants of Eden; but I do so no more, because I have discovered that I also live in 'creation's dawn.' The morning stars still sing together, and the world, not yet half made, becomes more beautiful every day."

I, the land, think I can live with that.

◇ *Does our vision excite you as much as it does us?*

◇ *The land is fragile—but together as caring partners, we can protect and enjoy this precious resource.*

◇ *We are commited to this vision.*

◇ *We ask your support and participation in reaching our mutual goal.*

RECREATION in our NATIONAL FORESTS cleanses one's spirit. Help us care for the spirit of the land.

Thank you,

DAVID F. JOLLY
Regional Forester

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Photo inset page 10:
USDA Forest Service

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